



# Inventory and Monitoring Program

*The San Francisco Bay Area Network Inventory and Monitoring Program tracks the status and trends of the region's natural resources in order to improve park management through greater reliance on scientific knowledge.*

## Project Highlights – March 2006

**Raptors Nesting at Pinnacles National Monument** – The raptor breeding season is well underway at Pinnacles National Monument. Prairie Falcons have established 13 territories and are inspecting and preparing nest sites for use. One Peregrine Falcon territory has been established as well. Egg-laden females have become lethargic and sit near chosen nest sites. Territorial intruders, however, are chased off with much wailing and stooping. General climbing and hiking advisories are now in effect to reduce disturbance in established territories. The advisories will be revised once nest incubation is confirmed.

Golden eagles, American kestrels, white-tailed kites, red-shouldered hawks, Cooper's hawks, and sharp-shinned hawks have also been documented. Great-horned, Western screech, and Northern pygmy owls have been heard throughout the park. The most significant owl observation is the confirmation of a Long-eared Owl nest in the Chalone housing area. Long-eared owls are uncommon statewide, and a California species of concern. The nest site near Chalone housing is the first ever confirmed in the park.

For more information, contact Gavin Emmons, Network Raptor Bio-Technician, ([Gavin\\_Emmons@nps.gov](mailto:Gavin_Emmons@nps.gov); 831-389-4485 x 270).

**Invasive Species – How Early Detection Works!** Andrea Williams and GOGA volunteer Jan Boudart hiked a survey loop while testing and developing the long-term monitoring protocol for Early Detection of Invasive Plant Species. The goal of the protocol is to detect invasive plant species early before populations spread and become established. During one of their pilot surveys, they found a single thoroughwort (*Ageratina adenophora*). This species invades mild coastal riparian areas, forested areas, and grasslands. Thoroughwort is common in the San Francisco Bay Area, and on Priority List 2 (species that are established in the park, but detecting new infestations is a priority). As a result of protocol testing, the weed was instantly mapped and pulled to prevent further infestation into the drainage.

For more information, contact Andrea Williams, Network Vegetation Specialist ([Andrea\\_Williams@nps.gov](mailto:Andrea_Williams@nps.gov); 415-331-0639).

**Spotted Owls – Focus on Inventory** – During previous years, the long-term spotted owl monitoring effort has focused on detecting population changes among a known set of owl territories. While this effort gave us critical information about the visited territories, statistical inference over the larger area was not possible. Our interest, however, is for the entire population of spotted owl and not just known nests. This year, survey efforts will focus on a comprehensive inventory for paired owls to identify all spotted owl territories at Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area. A subset of territories will then be selected at random for monitoring in the future. Adding a component of random selection will improve our ability to infer population trends over the larger region and enhance the scientific credibility of the monitoring efforts

For more information, contact Dawn Adams, Network Ecologist ([Dawn\\_Adams@nps.gov](mailto:Dawn_Adams@nps.gov); 415-464-5202).

**Elephant Seal Monitoring Season Ends** - The 2005-2006 elephant seal season is quickly coming to an end, marked by the departure of nearly all of the females from the headlands at Point Reyes. As of March 8th, 2006 the total elephant seal count in the headlands was at 552 animals, 446 of which were weaned pups; only eight females remained. There were 1283 elephant seals during the peak count at the end of January.

For more information, contact Heather Jensen, Network Wildlife Bio-technician, ([Heather\\_Jensen@nps.gov](mailto:Heather_Jensen@nps.gov); 415-464-5221).

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